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Fall 2015

*"The abuse of women and girls is the most pervasive and unaddressed human rights violation on earth."
— Jimmy Carter*

Stand up for Unity on WSU Chapel Renovation

Student Government at WSU began working with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and other WSU bodies last year to make Grace Chapel more flexible so that it could fulfill its original interfaith purpose. The chapel was built in 1965 with the intent of being open to students of all religious and spiritual beliefs, according to the WSU newspaper, the Sunflower. Throughout the spring of 2015, several articles in the Sunflower kept students and the community abreast of the discussions, changes, and the reasons for them. The main change was to remove the pews, which were bolted to the floor, carpet the floor and put in chairs, so that the space was more flexible. This idea was originally proposed in 2012 by the Campus Minister and others. The Muslim students supported the renovation as it gave them a space to pray on campus.

Recently, people who had obviously not been aware of this change have reacted quite negatively, claiming the changes are an attack on Christians, thus exposing anti-Muslim sentiments in the community. This goes against the purpose of the chapel, which is to promote inclusion and celebrate



diversity and tolerance.

With president Bardo, who had signed off on the renovations, now reportedly backpedaling, the student government representatives and the Muslim students have been left without the support that they had carefully built. The Peace and Social Justice Center has observed and supported the process of change and restoration of the chapel's original purpose, and encourages all to help further understanding of the multi-religious community that WSU represents.

Wichita Calls on Pompeo to Support the Iran Agreement



50 people from the Peace Center and MoveOn around Wichita showed up in August at Mike Pompeo's office to ask him to support the Iran agreement. We reminded him (only his staffers were present, but they are more worth talking to anyway) that the most knowledgeable US, UN and Israeli scientists and military officials supported the agreement. We brought up the overwhelming support and gratitude from the European countries, and from all people who want to give peace a chance. We hope the US, Russia, Iran, and Saudi Arabia will stop the insane arms flow from all sides into Syria and take the negotiated approach instead.

Don't Outsource our Water System!

Wichita Water Coalition (representing a growing coalition currently consisting of the Peace & Social Justice Center, Sunflower, Corporate Accountability International, Food & Water Watch, MoveOn and others) opposes the current proposed contract between the city of Wichita and CH2M Hill for the following reasons:

1. Wichita would be paying more than \$1.7 million for a consultant to do a job that the city could do on its own. The contract shows that CH2M Hill would rely heavily on the city's own staff and data, as well as freely available tools for management and staffing. The city should invest this money back into the water system and local jobs rather than outsourcing so that a private corporation can profit.

2. CH2M Hill is an abusive corporation that has no place in Wichita's water system. The corporation has a track record of abuses and is at the center of a number of controversies in involving bribery, breach of contract, defrauding the public, overcharging cities and the privatization of essential services. Why should Wichita Public Works & Utilities make a commitment to a corporation like that?

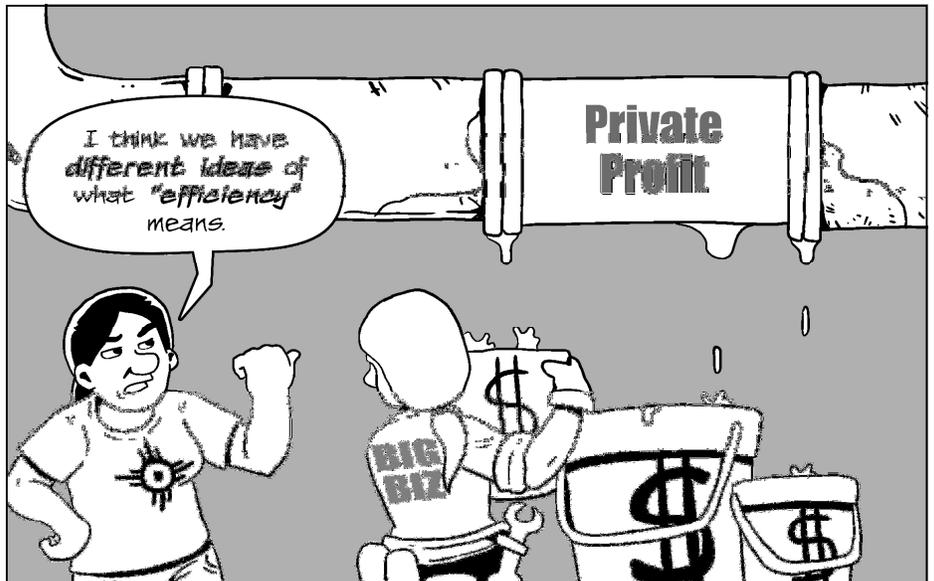
3. There is a clear conflict of interest embedded within this contract. CH2M Hill has a mandate to return a profit to its shareholders, not to prioritize the best interest of the city. The contract has no safeguard to ensure that CH2M

Hill will not prepare recommendations tailored to securing itself a lucrative privatization deal — a ten-year contract called "Phase 2."

We ask that Wichita City Council vote down (or withdraw) the proposed contract with CH2M Hill, in favor of a public solution: hiring a city Asset Manager and seeking public-public partnerships to address the city's current needs.

The City is expected to vote on the contract on Tuesday, November 10, 9:00 am at City Hall. Please attend!

We'll meet to discuss the proposed contract and alternatives to the "private/public partnership or "P3." Wichita Water Coalition: United Against Outsourcing Tuesday, October 27, 7:00 pm, Peace Center



UPHILL BATTLE AGAINST THE NRA AND THE GUN LOBBY

The newly formed Wichita Coalition against Gun Violence is gaining momentum and hope but they acknowledge a tough road ahead. Several Coalition members have had letters to the editor recently printed in the Eagle. They have organized at least four vigils, rallies, and memorials since late spring and had growing attendance and good press coverage. At the most recent vigil a week ago, three Wichita television stations covered the event and interviewed Coalition members and community attendees.

However, in our community, state and across the nation, gun violence continues as no meaningful legislation or legal challenges have taken hold. Our politicians are still being held hostage by extreme

right-wing gun owners and the National Rifle Association. According to the Washington Times, there have been 142 school shootings since Sandy Hook, Dec. 14, 2012 (not counting the recent deaths in Oregon and Arizona).



On Nov. 14, from 10 a.m. – 12 noon, the Coalition will host a leadership event at College Hill United Methodist Church. Sen. Oletha Faust-Goudeau will be present. Legislative and legal directions will be explored at this event called, CEASEFIRE. The public is invited and encouraged to attend. Please contact: Rev. Michelle Reed, 316-265-6669

Help Us Fill the Bus to the School of Americas & Steward Detention Center

The Peace and Social Justice Center of South Central Kansas to join thousands for the annual “Convergence of Hope and Resistance” to the School of the Americas at Fort Benning on November 20-22, 2015

Can you join us and help fill the bus to the SOA Watch this year?

For over 25 years, thousands of teachers, farmers, students, unionists, LGBT activists, environmentalists and people of conscience converge at the gates of the School of the Americas (SOA; also known as the *Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, WHINSEC*), to reaffirm peace and justice in the face of Empire.

The three day gathering in Columbus (GA) features:

- The opportunity to connect and learn about the current state of affairs throughout the Americas via dozens of workshops and seminars held at the Columbus Convention Center on Friday and Saturday evening (20th and 21st)
- A march on Saturday to the second largest privately owned prison where thousands of undocumented men, women and children are being incarcerated for indefinite periods of time until their deportation hearings. The march begins in the town of Lumpkin (GA) and ends at the gates of the nearby Steward Detention Center owned by the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA).
- The annual gathering and ‘Presente!’ vigil at the gates of Fort Benning on Sunday morning.

Bring your flags, banners, your voice, your fellow students, friends and family to this year’s SOA Watch weekend of action! We will call attention to continued US militarization in the hemisphere, and the pain it inflicts on our marginalized brothers and sisters throughout the Americas!



The School Of the Americas (SOA) Watch was created to oppose US-supported militarization in Latin America, and the resulting increase of human rights violations carried out by Latin American armies and police forces. The rise of domestic US militarization in response to protests in places like Cleveland, Ferguson, Baltimore, and Wichita has demonstrated that we in the U.S. are also at risk of brutal, heavy-handed, and intrusive "policing" that stifles dissent and erodes our fundamental human and civil rights.

Contact the Peace Center to learn more about our pilgrimage to Fort Benning, Georgia by bus! The cost per person for transportation and lodging for the weekend trip is estimated at \$250 - \$275, if 33 or more people go! If you can't travel with us, your donation could help offset the cost for one or more students who would like to go. Thank You!

City Defends Citizens' Right to Reform Marijuana Sentencing

On Sept. 17 in Topeka, activists from the Peace Center and the Marijuana Reform Initiative heard oral arguments in *State of Kansas vs. City of Wichita*. The State seeks to declare null and void, the vote of the citizens of Wichita to reform marijuana sentencing. Chief Deputy City Attorney Sharon Dickgrafe made a strong case for the City's history of modifying state laws as necessary. Dickgrafe also pointed out that the citizens' initiative process by petition and vote traces back to 1914 and was enshrined in statute in 1935, decades before Constitution Home Rule was adopted.

The State accused the citizens' initiative of "fatal procedural errors" after citizens voted April 7, 2015,

with a 54% majority to reform the penalties and tried to say Wichita petition signers and voters did not know what they were voting on. We did make procedural mistakes, but the judges pointed out that the law calls for giving wide latitude to citizens' petitions since they are not legal experts and don't have staff to deal with this.

The Peace Center thanks the City Council and the entire City Law Department for standing up for our vote on this common sense sentencing reform. We await the decision of the Kansas Supreme Court and hope we hear back with a positive ruling.

**Peace & Social Justice
Education Fund
1407 N. Topeka Street
Wichita, Kansas 67214**

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Dear Friends in Peace,

We are making progress, but we still need help to get to our goal before the end of the year!

Many of our friends and supporters have already donated to help replace our aging roof; If you are one of those people, we thank you so much for your support. Without your help, we wouldn't have made it this far.

We are hoping to have the funds for the roof by January 1. It is an ambitious goal, and we do have the City looming over us. With your help we will get there! We have raised a little over \$15,100 and we need \$20,000.

- Ending Mass Incarceration
- Protecting Access to Clean, Safe Water & Promoting Sustainability
- Seeking Justice for Palestine
- Shutting down the SOA & the
- Steward detention facility
- Abolishing Nuclear Weapons and Ending Gun Violence

***Please help Raise the Roof!
Send your support today!***
Peace Center
1407 N. Topeka
Wichita, KS 67214
Thanks!

Upcoming Events

First Friday Alternative Film: *The United States of ALEC*

Friday, November 6, 7:00 - 9:00 pm
Murdock Theatre, 536 N Broadway

The Cuban Political System & Cuban Proposals for Reform

Sunday, November 8, Snacks 6:30; Presentation 7:00 pm
Wichita State University Metroplex, 29th and N Oliver, Room 132

Wichita Water Coalition: United Against Outsourcing

Tuesday, October 27, 7:00 pm, Peace Center

City Council Vote on the Proposed Water Privatization Contract

Tuesday, November 10, 9:00 am, City Hall Council Chambers

Ceasefire! Leadership Conference against Gun Violence

Saturday, November 14, 10 am–12 noon, College Hill United Methodist
Legislative and legal directions will be explored. 316-265-6669

Save the Date for the 2015 Peace Center Annual Dinner

Friday, December 4, 6:00 pm, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church
Hear Dr. Russell Fox, Friends University speak on Sustainability